

## Tilgate Community Forum Minutes

### 7.45 Thursday 30 September 2021, Tilgate Community Centre

**Welcome back!** The Chair, Richard Handy, welcomed back the attendees, and also new members. This was the first meeting since the Covid epidemic began, and precautions were taken in line with Crawley Council requirements. These included a later start, ventilation, spacing and use of masks.

**Apologies** from Eileen Towes, Mr and Mrs Bennett, Sue Shropshire, Jennie and David Withall and Liam Richmond.

**Announcements:** An addition to the Constitution was agreed by the members:

*“In exceptional circumstances, when we cannot hold a public AGM, the Tilgate Forum Steering Committee remain in place until it is reasonable to hold the AGM.”*

Nomination forms were available for new Committee members to be appointed in the AGM at the next meeting. The AGM [Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November] will be notified to members no later than 2 weeks before the date, and notification will include Nomination forms.

**The Future of the Forum:** The Chair led a discussion to discover what people would like to see covered by the Forum. He invited people to choose any topic they want covered. The Forum is not party political, but is willing to cover political topics which are members' concerns. Questionnaires were given to attendees to complete. The Chair suggested several subject headings, including *Health, Jobs, Open Spaces, Young People, Police and Crime, Local Authorities and Transport*, to gauge members' interests and concerns. Under these headings some topics such as Diet, Mental health, Playgrounds, Planting trees and Gatwick were raised. Feedback from the floor included suggestions for possible speakers. [The Committee will be studying these responses to plan future meetings.]

**Tilgate Park:** Nick Hagon told us that he will be retiring from Tilgate Park at the end of the year. Over the past year he has been re-vamping the Peace Garden, which was beset by Himalayan balsam and tall weeds. Volunteers are needed.

Ancient woodlands have been neglected, and work is planned with the Woodland Trust for a 10 year programme, starting this autumn. One aim is to attract bees and butterflies back to ground level.

Nick showed us some of the colourful leaves and berries that can be seen now in the Park, including rowan, spindle, cherry and maple. There are good colours this year.

He recently led a walk which looked at climate change for Big Green Week. Looking at things we can do, he mentioned harvesting rain from water butts or drain pipes, and topping up a pond from domestic guttering. Guelder rose provides berries for birds, and daisy-like flowers are good for bees to collect nectar.

Trees are suffering from disease, climate change, soil erosion and compaction, and the quality of the air we breathe suffers as a result. We need more trees.

Nick introduced Sabrina Gant, who has taken over management of the Park. She realises she has big shoes to fill following Nick, who is about to reach 50 years service with Crawley Borough Council! She told us she is not a horticultural person, but is looking at

developments in the Park. The Lakeside cafe has proved popular with at least one member, and Sabrina told us that it was on trial, and more traders are planned, bearing in mind existing franchises and lessees.

**Councillors' updates:** Cllr. Maureen Mwagale mentioned the Covid support that she was involved with in Tilgate, and said that a survey of residents had been carried out on facebook about wild flowers, with some locations being suggested. It is planned to re-start the friends of Tilgate Park. She wants to increase the number of volunteers helping in the Park. There was a request from a resident that the Parade noticeboard is kept up to date. Maureen said that would be tidied up.

Cllr. Duncan Crow said that Oates Walk is "moving up the list" in answer to a resident's query about footpaths. The Council's bus survey has closed, but the local transport consultation is still going, he said. [Only until 8<sup>th</sup> October: see

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/draft-west-sussex-transport-plan-consultation> ]

Booking time slots for the Household Tip has made it easier to get in and out. Booking can be done by phone as well as online. It has made more efficient use of trips to the Tip, because people have taken more stuff in fewer journeys. In response to a query about increased fly-tipping, Duncan said there was no evidence it had increased, and it was often rogue traders who did the fly-tipping, rather than residents.

The Forum members appreciate that both Cllr. Michael Jones and Henry Smith M.P. attended, giving their support to the Forum as the Community Engagement member of the Council and our M.P. respectively.

Three raffle prizes were won, and the meeting was closed.

*Dates for the diary:*

- *Forum Annual General Meeting **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November** 7.45pm Community Centre*
- *Volunteers for Tilgate Park Heather Garden: second and fourth Wed each month 10 am*

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